THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Agriculture has not forwarded any report or recommendations of any core group set up by it as mentioned in the news-item. Policy and legislative framework for environment protection is already in existence in India. There is no question of the flow of development assistance being blocked for the lack of environment policy in the country.

3499. [*Transferred to the 30th March, 1992*]

Illegal felling of trees of reserved Forests in Darjeeling Hill Area

3500. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that due to the rampant and illegal fellings of trees a large chunk of Reserved Forest in Darjeeling Hill areas has been damaged ;

(b) if so, what is the total area so damaged ; and

(c) what steps are being taken to check the further damage ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) and (b) There has been no concentrated illegal felling of trees over large chunk of forests. However, stray felling of trees are noticed in a sporadic manner over an area of 14.52 sq. kms. of forests in Darjeeling Hills, as reported by the Government of West Bengal.

(c) The following steps are being taken by State Government to check the deforestation :—

(A) *Legal Steps :*

(i) Strict implementation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and amendments;

(ii) Promulgation of West Bengal Forest (Establishment and Regulation of Saw Mills and other Wood Based Industries) Rules, 1982 for exercising stricter control on saw mills ;

(iii) The Indian Forest Act (West Bengal Amendment 1988), 1927 providing for stringent measures.

(B) *Steps for mobilisation of people's support :*

(i) Strengthening of Forest protection forces with improved communication facilities, arms and ammunition ;

(ii) Formation of village Forest Protection Committees ;

(iii) Keeping liaison with Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council ;

(iv) Generating employment through implementation of various schemes of afforestation.

Thurst areas for abatement of Pullution

3501. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state whether Government have identified main thrust areas for abatement of pollution in